

Wednesday, November 9, 2011
Grace Episcopal Church
Scripture 202: Introduction to the Bible

Institution of Prophecy
Fant, Chapter 9

Prophets in Near East as early as 18th Century BCE. Was not the total function of the individual. Some prophetic activity – “Mari letters” – 1800 – 1760 BCE. Some were ecstatic.

Nature of Hebrew Prophecy

First mention – 1 Sam 10:5 – 869 and 842 BCE

- “Sons of prophets”
- “Man of God”
- “One who is called” Heb. Navi
 - Aaron, Miriam, 70 Elders, Eldad, Medad, unnamed, Gideon
 - Person called by YHWH to speak God’s message to the people.
 - Authority from God
- English word “prophet” from Gk “prophets”
 - Forth teller- commentary on historical events based on YHWH.
 - Both men and women

Functions of the Hebrew Prophets

Spokespersons for God

- Some were worship leaders, preservers of tradition, and predictors of national future.

Note figure 9.1 – Prophets from ninth to sixth centuries.

1. Meaning of natural catastrophe in relation to Israel’s history (Amos 4:7-12)
2. Announced moral judgment on God’s behalf
 - a. Champions of the powerless
 - i. Widows, orphans, poor, exploited (D 16:11; 24:10)
3. Organized revolts of established dynasties.
4. Counselors to the kings
 - a. 2 Sam 7:1-17

Worship Leaders

- Performed intercessory prayer for the people
- Offering sacrifices
- Distinction between prophet and priest not clear
- Critics of institutional religion

Preservers and Reinterpreters of Tradition

- Shared with priests

Predictors of the Nation's Future

- Future of God's covenant people
- By observing the present and interpreting demands of God

Representatives of preliterate prophecy

Found mostly in D, left no written reflection of the proclamations; reflect the struggle of conflicting elements in Hebrew Life

NATHAN

- Court prophet for David
- Three occasions
 - Approval of temple plan for Ark of Covenant
 - David = temple, Nathan = dynasty
 - Adultery with Bathsheba
 - Punishment
 - Violence would plague his life
 - Wives would commit adultery in view of public
 - The son of David's adultery would die
 - Influenced the succession of Solomon to throne

ELIJAH

- Worship of Baal replaced worship of YHWH
- Did WWF on Mount Carmel
- But fled in fear. God ordered to return to Israel to anoint Hazael king of Syria and Jehu king of Israel, Elisha

ELISHA

- Appears often with the "sons of the prophets"
- Sometimes travels with Heb. Army
- Led revolt with Jehu against dynasty of Ahab
- The sons of the prophets killed off the competition

Divine-human encounter with Pre-Lit prophets

- Call back Israel to the covenant